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FROGS

Beautiful Mantella

Mantella pulchra

Mantella pulchra is a small, diurnal and rather shy frog from the humid forests and swamps of east-central Madagascar, brown with pale green spots and a more subdued pattern than its brightly coloured relatives. The females grow to 25 mm. It feeds on ants and other small arthropods and needs a cool, humid enclosure with many hides.

Family: Mantellidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**20-25 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**4-8 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest and wetland**
Skin toxins in the wild	**Mild**
Skin toxins in captivity	**None** Captive-bred animals. Wild-caught animals can keep their toxins for a long time
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles in water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Sexually mature	**12-18 months**
Eggs per clutch	**12-30**
Hatching	**3-12 days**
Larval period	**56-112 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants and complete diet**
Parental care	**None**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 4 adults
Temperature, day	**20-24 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-18 °C**
Humidity	**70-100%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In groups**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
IUCN	**Near Threatened (NT)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about the care of *Mantella pulchra*, and the species is rarely bred in captivity.
TEMPERATURE	During the day the temperature should be 20-24 °C, and at night it may fall to 16-18 °C. The species tolerates 19-25 °C without problems, but a longer period above 25 °C causes stress and disease and can kill the animals.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity should be high most of the time, 70-100 %. Mist the enclosure with dechlorinated water every day, heavily in warm weather and a little less when it is cold. The substrate should be damp, but not waterlogged.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	Place a shallow water bowl in the enclosure, and keep it full at all times. The frogs are poor swimmers, so the bowl must be so shallow that they can easily get out, and it must not take up much of the floor.
LIGHTING AND UVB	No UVB requirement is documented for the species, and the frogs manage without. A weak UVB light (Ferguson zone 1) can be used as an optional extra, provided there is shade and plants so the animals can choose.
FEEDING	The frog is an eager hunter and can eat relatively large prey for its size. In the wild the genus feeds mostly on ants and mites.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Mantella pulchra* is diurnal, but rather shy and may stay hidden among leaves and plants until food appears. The males patrol their area, call from the leaf litter and may wrestle with one another.
NATIVE RANGE	Madagascar.